

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6261

S E C R E T RABAT 4022

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FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: MARR PFOR MO  
SUBJECT: NAVTRACOM KENITRA

1. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT FOR FISCAL AND TECHNICAL REASONS, U.S. NAVY HAS FOR SOME TIME NOW BEEN INTERESTED IN CUTTING BACK FACILITIES IT MAINTAINS AT KENITRA. HOWEVER, DURING THE MONTHS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING 1973 ARAB-ISRAELI WAR, I CONSIDERED IT IMPERATIVE THAT USN SHOULD NOT, FOR REASONS UNRELATED TO OUR POLITICAL CONCERNS IN THIS COUNTRY AND REGION, UNDERTAKE ACTIONS AT KENITRA WHICH MOROCCANS MIGHT CONSTRUE AS NEGATIVE SIGNAL OF USG INTENTION TO REMAIN AND SUPPORT THE STRENGTHENING OF US-MOROCCAN RELATIONS. I THEREFORE OBTAINED, FROM CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS, ASSURANCE THAT OUR NAVAL PRESENCE AT KENITRA-SIDI YAHIA-BOUKNADEL COMPLEX WOULD NOT BE REDUCED UNLESS A HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL DECISION HAD BEEN MADE TO THAT EFFECT. THIS PROMISE HAS BEEN FULLY HONORED.

2. SITUATION IN MOROCCO HAS NOW CHANGED, IN THAT WE HAVE MADE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A FAIRLY LARGE MILITARY SALES AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. THIS AND RELATED DEVELOPMENTS HAVE NOW IN MY OPINION REACHED STAGE WHERE WE CAN REOPEN CONSIDERATION OF

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POSSIBLE BASE REDUCTIONS, PARTICULARLY AT KENITRA.

POLITICAL PROBLEMS INHERENT IN POSSIBLE MOROCCAN MISREADING OF OUR INTENTIONS REMAIN, BUT I BELIEVE WE NOW HAVE ENOUGH ASSETS IN OTHER ELEMENTS OF OUR TOTAL PRESENCE HERE SO THAT I CAN, AT HIGHEST LEVELS OF GOM, MANAGE THESE PROBLEMS--ALWAYS PROVIDED THAT ANY REDUCTIONS THAT MAY EVENTUALLY BE UNDERTAKEN BE VERY CAREFULLY PLANNED FROM POLITICAL AS WELL AS TECHNICAL POINTS OF VIEW, AND PHASED GRADUALLY OVER SUFFICIENTLY PROTRACTED PERIOD OF TIME TO ALLOW US AMPLE OPPORTUNITY TO MAINTAIN OUR BALANCE AS WE GO ALONG AS WELL AS AVOID APPEARANCE OF CRASH PROGRAM.

3. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT U.S. NAVY PRESENTLY WISHES TO RETAIN EXISTING FACILITIES AT SIDI YAHIA AND BOUKANDEL, AT LEAST FOR NEXT SEVERAL YEARS. I SHALL THEREFORE CONFINE PRESENT ANALYSIS TO WHAT I SEE AS PRACTICAL POSSIBILITIES WITHIN EXISTING BILATERAL POLITICAL FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTING SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION AT KENITRA DURING THAT TIME FRAME.

A. MOROCCAN POLITICAL PERCEPTIONS: IT REMAINS OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE THAT MOROCCAN OFFICIALS AT HIGHEST LEVELS NOT BE ALLOWED TO INTERPRET ANY FUTURE REDUCTIONS AT KENITRA AS SIGNIFYING ANY DIMINISHED U.S. POLITICAL INTEREST IN THEIR COUNTRY. SECONDARY BUT IMPORTANT COROLLARY IS THAT MOROCCAN PUBLIC IN GENERAL NOT MISCONSTRUE SUCH REDUCTIONS AS SIGNIFYING "AMERICAN WITHDRAWAL"--OR EVEN WORSE, THAT THE NOTION GAIN CURRENCY THAT WE ARE SOMEHOW BEING EJECTED AT GOM BEHEST. WHAT ALL THIS SUGGESTS TO ME IS THAT IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT KING FULLY UNDERSTAND OUR PURPOSES AND THE LIMITS OF OUR INTENTIONS BEFORE WE EMBARK ON ANY VISIBLE REDUCTIONS, AND THAT REDUCTIONS BE PHASED OVER A CONSIDERABLE PERIOD OF TIME.

B. QUESTION OF QUID PRO QUO. THERE IS NO WRITTEN AGREEMENT BETWEEN USG AND MOROCCO GOVERNING OUR USE OF KENITRA-SIDI YAHIA-BOUKNADEL COMPLEX. IT IS NEVERTHELESS GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD AT HIGHEST LEVELS OF GOM AND USG THAT WE ARE COMPENSATING MOROCCO, TO SOME EXTENT AT LEAST, FOR OUR FACILITIES AT SIDI YAHIA AND BOUKNADEL BY SUPPORT WE ARE GIVING TO MOROCCO'S OWN MILITARY FACILITIES AT KENITRA.

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HOWEVER, THOSE USN ACTIVITIES AT KENITRA, WHICH ARE REGARDED BY GOM AS MOST USEFUL TO THEM, GENERALLY TEND TO FALL IN THE GROUP OF KENITRA ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE MOST MARGINAL IN TERMS DIRECT U.S. MILITARY INTERESTS THERE. NO DOUBT CERTAIN KENITRA SUPPORT FACILITIES OF A PURELY AMERICAN CHARACTER COULD BE COMBINED WITH EXISTING FACILITIES AT SIDI YAHIA OR BOUKNADEL WITHOUT MATERIALLY DISTURBING THIS IMPLICIT QUID PRO QUO WITH MOROCCANS. BUT WE SHALL HAVE

TO PROCEED WITH EXTREME CAUTION IN PHASING DOWN SOME OF THE OTHER ACTIVITIES AT KENITRA WHICH MOROCCANS FIND MORE DIRECTLY USEFUL.

C. OTHER PROBLEMS. FOR EXAMPLE, REDUCTION IN MOROCCAN LABOR FORCE EMPLOYED BY USN AT KENITRA WILL PREDICTABLY INVOLVE LOCAL ANGUISH, AND PERHAPS SOME LABOR UNREST AND POLITICAL FLAK--MITIGATED TO EXTENT REDUCTION IS PHASED OVER LONG PERIOD. THIS KIND OF PROBLEM OF COURSE OCCURS WHENEVER WE PHASE DOWN FACILITY ANYWHERE, BUT PROBLEMS WILL BE ACCENTUATED HERE BY POLITICAL SENSITIVITY INEVITABLY ATTACHED TO A USG MILITARY FACILITY IN AN ARAB COUNTRY, AND BY ABSENCE OF ANY WRITTEN AGREEMENT COVERING OUR USE OF THIS FACILITY.

4. IN SUM, I CONSIDER IT FEASIBLE TO BEGIN PLANNING FOR A GRADUAL PROCESS WHICH OVER A SEVERAL YEAR PERIOD WILL SEE USN FACILITY AT KENITRA SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED IN SCALE AND FUNCTION. THE POLITICAL OBJECTIONS TO A SHARP REDUCTION IN THIS FACILITY WHICH I CITED AT THE OUTSET OF THIS MESSAGE HAVE NOT BEEN ELIMINATED IN THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, BUT THEY HAVE BEEN REDUCED. IT REMAINS, HOWEVER, ESSENTIAL THAT ANY REDUCTIONS BE CARRIED OUT GRADUALLY AND ONLY AFTER MOST CAREFUL PREPARATION AND COORDINATION WITH GOM AT ALL APPROPRIATE LEVELS. FIRST STEP WOULD APPEAR TO BE IN-HOUSE EXAMINATION OF ISSUE, AFTER WHICH I MIGHT BROACH IT WITH KING LATE THIS YEAR, ASSUMING STATE AND DOD CONCURRENCE.

5. I INTEND TO DISCUSS AT LEAST THE BROAD OUTLINES OF THIS PROPOSAL WITH CONCERNED STATE AND DOD OFFICIALS WHILE I AM IN WASHINGTON ON CONSULTATION SEPTEMBER 8-12.

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NOTE BY OC/T: HANDLED AS NODIS REPLACED BY STADIS CAPTION PER S/S-O.

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